

**TOPPENISH CITY COUNCIL**  
**Study Session Minutes**  
**May 3, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Oaks called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**REMOTE MEETING INSTRUCTIONS**

DCC Renfrew recited the remote meeting instructions for the record pursuant to Governor Inslee's Emergency Proclamation with the temporary suspension of certain provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act during the COVID-19 Outbreak, the Toppenish City Council Chambers will not be open for the public to attend the meeting in person. In addition, she recited the instructions to attend the meeting in "listen only" mode by using the call-in phone number.

**ROLL CALL**

Remote Attendees: Mayor Mark Oaks, Mayor Pro Tem Elpidia Saavedra, and Councilmembers Loren Belton, Naila Duval, George Garcia, and Clara Jiménez.

Absent: Councilmember Juan Ceja.

Remote Staff: City Manager Lance Hoyt (CM Hoyt), City Attorney Gary Cuillier, Administrative Services Director Debbie Zabell (ASD Zabell), Fire Chief Tim Smith, Public Works Superintendent Rocky Wallace, Permit Services Coordinator Victor Shaul, City Clerk Heidi Riojas, Deputy City Clerk Sabrina Renfrew (DCC Renfrew), and Cable Television Manager Judy Devall.

DCC Renfrew conducted roll call for each City Councilmember to respond their attendance at the meeting. Mayor Oaks, Mayor Pro Tem Saavedra, and Councilmembers Belton, Duval, Garcia, and Jiménez responded their remote attendance during roll call. Councilmember Ceja was not present at the meeting.

Councilmember Jiménez moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia to excuse Councilmember Ceja from the May 3, 2021 Study Session. Motion carried unanimously.

**BRIEF LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Representative Jeremie Dufault provided a brief update on the 15th District, especially highlighting legislative wins, including securing funds to do a planning study to expand the Toppenish Rodeo Grounds. He noted Legislative Assistant Alec Regimbal's efforts in assisting to secure the funds. He also expressed concern over the Blake Decision, which decriminalizes possession of drugs, effective January 2, 2023. Lastly Representative Dufault commented on efforts to focus on the infrastructure needs of District communities.

**RECEIVE UPDATE ON HOUSING STUDY MANAGED BY YAKIMA VALLEY  
CONFERENCE OF GOVERNMENTS**

YVCOG Executive Director Wickenhagen discussed the results of the Community Survey, a portion of the Housing Study Planning Grant funded by The Kresge Foundation. The purpose of the Community Survey is to result in the following outcomes: 1) Draft response to community requests; 2) Determine the effects of substandard housing; 3) Determine socioeconomic factors affecting health; and 4) Identify Funding Opportunities in response to community needs. Director Wickenhagen polled Councilmembers what each liked best and least about their respective Toppenish neighborhoods; then compared their comments to the result of the Community Survey. A meeting is set for May 4, 2021 for the Community Task Force to focus on the details of survey results.

**POLICE CHIEF RECRUITMENT**

CM Hoyt provided Council with an update on the Police Chief recruitment. He noted that two applicants were interviewed by a community panel. One applicant was asked to continue in the recruitment process; however, he ultimately withdrew his application. Prothman Company is assisting the City with continued recruitment efforts. CM Hoyt shared the anticipated dates for the application process.


**GRAFFITI CLEAN-UP**

CM Hoyt provided an update on the City's graffiti-removal program that partners with the Hope for the Nations Ministry to remove graffiti on privately owned properties. He noted that two police officers are assigned to the Gang and Graffiti Program. During this time, CM Hoyt and Council encouraged the public to call the Police Department to report graffiti, and the Public Works Department with the properties in need of graffiti removal.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MARK OAKS, MAYOR

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SABRINA RENFREW, DEPUTY CITY CLERK